

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Francesca Maviglia and I am a New Haven residents and a public health professional at the Yale School of Public Health.

I am writing you to day to strongly support HB 6616: “An Act Concerning Expansion Of Husky Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status”.

I’m a graduate of the Yale School of Public Health and I currently work in the public health field. The evidence regarding the benefit of health insurance coverage is overwhelming: fewer premature deaths, improvements in overall self-reported care, improved mental health and lower stress, better management of chronic conditions. The economic impact for society as a whole is also positive: when individuals have health insurance, they are able to access preventative medicine and regular check-ups, thus resulting in fewer visits to the emergency department and lowering the cost of hospital uncompensated care.

When I was a public health student, I volunteered at the HAVEN Free Clinic, a student-run primary care clinic that partners with Yale University to provide uninsured adults in New Haven with primary care, wellness education, and assistance in securing health care. The lack of health insurance was a huge barrier in getting proper care for our patients: even though we were able to provide them with primary care, access to specialized treatment remained complicated and burdensome. Often our patients would come to the clinic with health conditions that had gone untreated for years because they were not able to see a doctor, thus complicating their prognosis and increasing the costs of their care.

The personal and societal costs of the barriers to health care created by lack of insurance are immense. The United States per capita health care spending is above the average of peer countries, and it fares worse on many health outcomes, including overall life expectancy. This paradox can only be address by expanding access to primary care for everyone. No one should have to forego needed medical treatments, or skip on a preventative care visit, because of lack of insurance.

Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 26 regardless of immigration status is an important step in making sure our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we all need and deserve. But our work doesn’t end with expanding access up to age 26; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

I enthusiastically support HB 6616 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all community members in CT regardless of age or status.

Thank you for your time,
Francesca Maviglia